
VA Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ March/April 2018

March/April 2018 OTGR Director's Note

Hello and welcome to the March/April edition of the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) newsletter. Spring has been off to a very slow start here in the DC area with an icy chill lingering in the air, but as I write this, it looks like sunshine may finally be here to stay as we move into the latter part of the spring season.

I wanted to begin by acknowledging a milestone. Ms. Connie Moffitt, VA Black Hills Health Care System Supervisory EEO Field Manager who also served a very important role as tribal liaison working with the VA and tribes in western South Dakota, retired at the end of December after 37 years of federal service. Ms. Moffitt will soon receive a Distinguished Career Award from the VA Secretary, which will be presented during a ceremony to be held in South Dakota in the coming days. This award is reserved for VA employees who have provided exceptional service over the course of their career to Veterans and the VA. We would like to congratulate Connie, as she is well deserving of this recognition and we wish her all the best as she settles in to enjoy her retirement.

The winter chill hasn't kept our VA OTGR team home these past couple of months as they've been on the road working with tribal communities to roll out the "Your Service, Our Mission: Bringing Benefits Home" presumptive VA claims campaign across Indian Country. The OTGR team is partnering with tribal and state departments of Veterans affairs, the VA Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the VA Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and Veterans Service Organizations to travel on site to tribal communities hosting claims events focused on reaching Veterans who may have presumptive health conditions because of their service, or who may be eligible for pension benefits.

During the past couple of months, claims events have been held in the following communities and locations: Navajo Nation (Shiprock, NM; Many Farms, AZ; Cottonwood/Tselani Chapter House, Cottonwood, AZ; Kayenta Health Center, AZ) Taos Pueblo, NM; Tohono O'odham Nation; Sells, AZ; and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Seminole, OK.

Looking ahead during the month of May, claims events are scheduled to be held in: Tuba City, AZ; Window Rock, AZ (both Arizona locations are Navajo Nation); Copper River, AK; Ponca City, OK (Osage Nation); and on the Tule River Indian Reservation. We have outreach materials and press releases to share, and for additional information please email David.Ward@va.gov. David (who goes by Clay) can answer questions and direct you to the OTGR Tribal Government Relations Specialist who is serving as the lead point of contact for these events which will continue to occur in various locations through the remainder of 2018. A schedule of events can also be found on our website: www.va.gov/tribalgovernment.

I'll also share additional engagements the OTGR team covered during the past couple of months including the Department of Health and Human Services Indian Health Service/Urban Indian Health Programs and

Tribal Health Programs (ITU) trainings for health care providers held in Denver, CO, Sacramento, CA, Gallup, NM, and Albuquerque, NM. Additionally, on the health care front, the VHA Community Care Office along with the Indian Health Service Office of Urban Indian Health Programs hosted a webinar for Urban Indian Health Programs interested in becoming providers VA uses to refer Veterans to care in the community.

I hope you find our newsletter informative and helpful. If you have submissions to the newsletter, please email content or questions to tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov. We monitor this mailbox from our DC office and will get back in touch right away. We look forward to catching up with tribal leaders, Veterans, family members, and Veteran service providers during our travels in the weeks ahead. In the mean time...

Happy Reading





VA launches nationwide outreach campaign in tribal communities

Throughout 2018, VA is launching a nationwide campaign to roll out Veteran disability enrollment claim events collaboratively with 20 tribal communities. The campaign, titled “Your Service. Our Mission: Bringing Benefits Home” kicked off March 21 in Navajo Nation. Tribal communities in 11 states have already confirmed their participation. “This nationwide outreach campaign will focus on identifying and assisting Veterans across Indian Country to come and fill out disability and pension claims,” said Thayer Verschoor, executive director of VA’s intergovernmental affairs.

VA realizes that reaching these Veterans could have a direct, tangible impact on their lives and that of their families.

“We appreciate the participation of our 20 tribal communities who have shown interest,” said Stephanie Birdwell, director, VA’s Office of Tribal Government Relations. “This helps VA enhance and improve the experience for all Veterans and their spouses. We are hopeful as word spreads and tribal communities see the benefit from these events, requests to schedule more will occur.”

Late last year, letters were mailed to more than 500 tribal communities nationwide. “VA’s Benefits Assistance Service is working hand in hand with tribal government leaders to roll out these claims events,” said Mike Frueh, chief of staff, VA’s Veterans Benefits Administration. “With the focus on Veterans and their widows with presumptive disabilities and those who are pension eligible, VA is hopeful we can help Indian country Veterans access the full range of benefits they have courageously earned through their service.”





A full list of the 20 tribal communities currently scheduled for claim clinics in 2018 are:

- Copper River Native Association (Alaska)
- Native Village of White Mountain (Alaska)
- Tule River Tribe (California)
- Walker River Paiute Tribe (Nevada)
- Siletz Tribe (Oregon)
- Nooksack Indian Tribe (Washington)
- Bay Mills Indian Community (Michigan)
- White Earth Nation (Minnesota)
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians (Wisconsin)
- Osage Nation (Oklahoma)
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma (Oklahoma)
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe (Oklahoma)
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (Oklahoma)
- Kewa Pueblo (New Mexico)
- Pasqui Yaqui Tribe (Arizona)
- Tohono O'odham Nation (Arizona)
- San Carlos Apache (Arizona)
- Navajo Nation (Arizona)
- Pueblo of Pojoaque (New Mexico)
- Taos Pueblo (New Mexico)



“Many tribal Veterans and families may not realize VA presumes that certain medical conditions are related to military service, although these conditions may first appear after discharge,” said Frueh. “In addition, spouses may be eligible for certain benefits when a Veteran dies as a result of what VA calls presumptive disabilities.” VA will have staff on hand to review claims on the spot, with the goal of completing the claim same day.

To learn more about VA tribal government programs and services visit <https://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/locations.asp>.



Yakama Nation Signs Memorandum of Agreement with Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

Here's a message dated April 10, 2018, from Steven Gill, WDVA Veterans Service Administrator and Tribal Liaison

"I am proud to announce that we have entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. It allows your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs to extend our VA accreditation as a Veteran Service Organization to the Tribal Veterans Representative Program of the Yakama Nation.



Yakama Chairman JoDe Goudy and Alfie Alvarado-Ramas, Director, WDVA, sign MOU for training and accreditation of the Yakama Nation Veterans Program.

This agreement is made possible by recent Federal rule changes that allow VA accredited agencies, such as WDVA, to extend accreditation to Tribal Veterans Representatives and Service Officers in a manner similar to the way that we accredit Service Officers in individual Counties.

I am excited about our partnership because it expands our statewide network of accredited Veteran Service Officers who can help connect veterans and their families to their earned benefits.

The Yakama Nation also recognizes the importance of this agreement because it allows their Tribal Veterans Representative to better advocate for veterans and



their families by developing and representing VA disability claims as an accredited Veteran Service Officer.

Ultimately, more veterans and their families will receive their earned benefits, such as a VA disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, and survivors benefits. I look forward to working with each of our State's Tribes to determine whether a similar agreement would benefit their members. If you'd like to learn more about the new Federal rules or this agreement, please contact Steven Gill, WDVA Veteran Services Administrator and Tribal Liaison, at 360-725-2235 or steveng@dva.wa.gov."



Native American Veterans D-Day Ceremony in Normandy, France

Here's an open invitation for a D-Day Commemoration in Normandy, France in early June. For more information, contact Joe Podlasek joep@trickstergallery.com

Madame Marie-Pascale LEGRAND
Charles Shay Indian Memorial
27 rue de Secqueville
14740 BRETTEVILLE L'ORGUEILLEUSE
France

To whom may concern,

INVITATION LETTER

I undersign, Mrs Marie-Pascale LEGRAND, Charles Shay Indian Memorial, welcome you to send a representative or more, to join us and take part to the 2018 D-Day ceremonies that will take place in Normandy June 1st till June 8th 2018.

Tribe representatives, Native veterans and their families will join the Charles Norman Shay Delegation and will participate to all national ceremonies as well as to the Charles Shay Indian Memorial Ceremony that will take place on Omaha Beach.

With best regards,

Marie-Pascale LEGRAND


Bretteville, August 18th 2017



Charles Norman Shay Delegation - D-DAY 2018 PROGRAM

<u>Thursday may 31st</u>	Private diner with Charles and 15 WW2 veterans at St Germain de Varreville
<u>Friday june 1st</u>	<p>09:30 : Meeting Charles /Portbail medium school children - WN 62 Omaha Beach</p> <p>11:15 Colleville Cemetery with children (Portbail medium school)</p> <p><u>02:00 to 05:30 pm</u>: Welcome CNS delegation and D-Day 2018 Program presentation Marie's home (50 people)</p> <p><u>08:00 pm</u>: WW2 Film Festival – Utah Beach Museum. (07:00 pm for Charles as VIP guest)</p> <p>Tickets available online: http://www.wwiifoundation.org/events/film/. ASAP.</p>
<u>Saturday june 2nd</u>	<p><u>09:30- 12:00</u> The Dead Man's Corner Museum. Adress: 3 Vierge de l'Amont, 50500 Saint-Côme-du-Mont. Private visit. Flight simulator on a C-47. Meeting 14 actors of « Band of Brothers » and book signing.</p> <p><u>12 :00 – 13 :30</u> : Ceremony honoring Native Americans.</p> <p><u>13 :30 - 16 :00</u> Liberty March and 101st arrivals – Place de la république Carentan - WW2 veterans and Native Americans honor (on stage).</p> <p><u>06:00 pm</u> : Diner: La Ferme de Billy. Rots.</p>
<u>Sunday June 3rd</u>	<p><u>10 :00 am</u> Brévands. Lieu-dit Les Moulins - Ceremony 506th PIR and 326th AEB/101st Airborne</p> <p><u>11 :00 am</u> : La Fièvre - Jumps with 100 paratroopers Liberty Jump (Texas) + Round Canopy Parachuting Team UK (100 paratroopers). VIP access for veterans. Lunch with 20 WW2 veterans. Military jumps with 600 paratroopers (various nations)</p> <p><u>03 :00 pm</u> : Military Parade with veterans at Ste Mère Eglise + Geronimo camp.</p> <p><u>07:00 pm</u> Diner: La Ferme de Billy. Rots.</p>
<u>Monday june 4th</u>	<p><u>10:00 am</u> : Colleville US Normandy Cemetery : Ceremony with Historic Program. Charles and Marie as speakers</p> <p><u>11:30 am</u>. Colleville US Normandy Cemetery - Ceremony for Native American soldiers buried in the Normandy US war cemetery</p> <p><u>04:00 pm</u>: St James US Brittany Cemetery - Ceremony for Native American soldiers buried in the Brittany US war cemetery</p> <p><u>07:00 pm</u> Diner: La Ferme de Billy. Rots.</p>
<u>Tuesday june 5th</u>	<p>10:00 am : Charles Shay Indian Memorial St Laurent sur Mer Adress: 95 Rue de la 2ième division US -14710 Saint Laurent sur Mer</p> <p>12:00: CNS Documentary film : Mairie de St Laurent sur Mer. Chemin Eglise, 14710 Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer</p> <p>Free time on Omaha beach and tour guided by Christophe Welcome refreshments Villa "Les Moulins"- Rue de la Libération. 14710 St Laurent sur mer Mme Benoist St Laurent</p> <p>07:00 pm Diner: La Ferme de Billy. Rots.</p>
<u>Wednesday june 6th 2018</u>	<p><u>09:00 am</u>: Ceremony at 1st ID Monument - Colleville sur Mer. Lunch at Ouistreham</p> <p><u>04:30 pm</u>: International Ceremony at Ranville Gun Battery or Military parade with veterans in Arromanches.</p> <p><u>07:30 pm</u> Diner: La Ferme de Billy. Rots.</p>



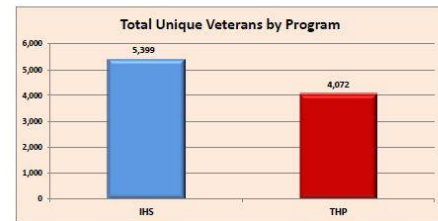
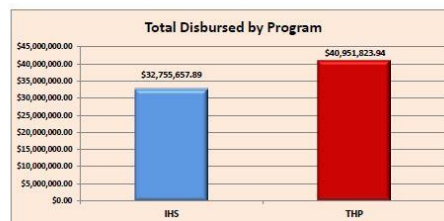
VA Reimburses over \$73.7 Million to IHS and Tribal Health Programs

Tribal health clinics interested in entering a reimbursement agreement with VA for serving veterans should send an initial note of interest to:

tribal.agreements@va.gov

Indian Health Service/Tribal Health Program

National Data				
Total Disbursement for IHS/THP Program Agreement Date to FYTD	Total Disbursement by Program - Agreement Date to FYTD			Total Unique Veterans for IHS/THP Program Agreement Date to FYTD
	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Veterans	
\$73,707,481.83	IHS	\$32,755,657.89	5,399	9,253
	THP	\$40,951,823.94	4,072	
Total Disbursement - Out of System Ret repayments (only)	Total Disbursement of Out of System Ret repayments (only) - included in National Data			Total Unique Veterans - Out of System Ret repayments (only)
	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Veterans	
\$38,427.00	IHS	\$22,021.00	972	1,382
	THP	\$16,406.00	410	



Blackfeet Veteran's Alliance Receive 2018 Ford Explorer for Veterans

For more information on how to apply to Wounded Warriors Family Support for a new vehicle to assist with your tribe's veterans, see the following page and contact:

Martin.Duarte@wwfs.org



Marvin Weatherwax from Blackfeet Veteran's Alliance in front of the tribe's new 2018 Ford Explorer



May 17, 2016

Greetings,

My name is Martin Duarte, Master Gunnery Sergeant, USMC, (Retired). I work for Wounded Warriors Family Support (WWFS) in the programs department. I am the coordinator for Native American Veterans Support, Transition and Respite (NAVSTaR) program. This program ensures that Native American veterans, especially those who are combat wounded, are helped in a meaningful way.

If your Tribe is in need of a vehicle, please provide me with the below requested information so I may vet your request through our administrative process.

1. Location of Tribe so we can find the closes Ford dealership.
2. Closest Veterans Affairs Office, i.e distance (mileage) from the Reservation.
3. Number of Native American Veterans in tribe.
4. Number of Veterans that the tribe transports at one time to their appointments, this will give us and idea on the size of the vehicle.
5. What type of vehicle will meet your requirements (i.e. 4x4 or 4x2).
6. Tribe W9 (Tribe Identification Number and Certification).
7. Tribes major challenges assisting Veterans.

Administrative Note:

Please be advise that if Wounded Warriors Family Support is able to support the request, the tribe will be responsible for titling the vehicle, insurance, gas, and regular maintenance.

WWFS is a national organization that supports and advocates for our nation's Veterans wounded warriors. WWFS has donated many vehicles nation-wide to other tribal veteran-related programs. If any questions or concerns should arise pertaining to this matter, I may be reach via my cell phone at (760) 405-7777 or by e-mail at martin.duarte@wwfs.org.

Sincerely,

Martin Duarte

Martin Duarte
Assistant Program Director/ Outreach

920 S 107th Avenue, Suite 250 Omaha, Nebraska 68114 Phone (402) 932-7036 Fax (402) 916-4399

Native Report – Native Veteran Dan King



Here's a [video from Native Report](#) (Season 13: Episode 7) which starts at 19:38 and details the experiences of Army veteran Dan King, Oneida (WI).

“We visit the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, where we view a very special exhibit of hand-woven portraits of female Elders from Wisconsin’s 12 Native nations. We learn about Bay Bank, a financial institution owned and operated by the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. And we meet Vietnam veteran Daniel King of the Oneida Nation, who discusses his experiences during the tumultuous era of the 60s.”





National Gathering of American Indian Veterans

Please consider attending the 4th Annual Gathering of American Indian Veterans. This event gets bigger and better every year. For more information, contact Joe Podlasek joep@trickstergallery.com and for a Vimeo slideshow, click here: <https://vimeo.com/239002049>



SAVE THE DATE!

**Friday, July 20, 2018 to
Sunday, July 22, 2018**

**4th Annual National Gathering of
American Indian Veterans:
Celebrating *all* U.S. Military**

**Join us for a weekend of
healing and learning.
This event is to honor all
veterans, eras, and tribes.**

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children, and
general public are
all welcome!**

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for updates**

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You can also read the 2017 Report for last year's gathering [HERE](http://www.trickstergallery.com/2017-national-gathering-report/):
<http://www.trickstergallery.com/2017-national-gathering-report/>



Native American Traditions Help Former Soldiers

Here's an [article by Phil Dierking from VOA News](#) which ran on March 26, 2018.

"Michael Carroll served 18 months in Iraq for the United States Army. After coming home in 2004, doctors found that he suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Mental health experts say the disorder develops in some people who have experienced a shocking or dangerous event. Such persons may feel frightened even when they are not in danger. They also can suffer from depression for months or even years after the event.

Michael Carroll left the army after receiving an honorable discharge. He described the change to civilian life as difficult, and that he was quick to express anger. Carroll told VOA "Anything could trigger me, sounds to smells to seeing trash on the side of the road." The unwanted waste made him remember explosive devices used against coalition soldiers in the Iraq war.

Over the next few years, he received the usual treatment for PTSD, which included medication and meetings with mental health experts. He said this did him more harm than good. In 2009, while being treated at the Spokane Veterans Center, Carroll heard about an outdoor recreational retreat for military veterans like him. The retreat was organized and financed by a group of Spokane Valley firefighters. Carroll said this was where he experienced his first sweat lodge. "It blew my mind. And it saved my life."

Healing with ancient traditions

Since ancient times, Native American and Alaskan Natives have shown great respect to warriors. The native people have developed prayers, ceremonies and traditions to honor returning soldiers and ease their way back into the community.

One of the most common is a traditional steam bath, known as a "sweat." This tradition is believed to have started with the Plains Indians. It is now practiced, in different forms, by many American tribes.

The U.S. Veterans Administration has recognized the value of sweats to Native service members. Since the 1990s, the government has permitted tribes to hold sweats at several VA medical centers across the country. Now, non-Native veterans have started the tradition. Darrin Coldiron is a Spokane firefighter and president of Veterans Community Response (VCR), an all-volunteer group that holds several gatherings a year. Coldiron told VOA that he learned about the importance of native traditions in college. He said "I learned that in so many societies, when you send a warrior off, there's a ceremony, and you bring them home with ceremony."



Craig Falcon, a member of the Blackfeet tribe who leads ceremonies at VCR retreats, explained how the sweat has been used in his culture to help warriors returning to civilian life.

"You come back from war with things attached to you," he said. "And some of those things may not be good. They could be memories. Or it could be somebody you killed, and that person attaches himself to you and comes home with you. Ceremonies help wash those things off, send them back to where they came from and get you back to who you are." Roger Vielle, another member of the Blackfeet tribe, has served on VCR's board as spiritual adviser since 2009. At first, he was not sure how non-Natives would like the sweat.

Vielle said, "Some of the stories they share afterward and some of the things that have happened to them during the sweat are like — 'He struggled to find words. They say something happens there. They've gotten in touch with something.' And I tell them, I'm not the one doing it... You did the work, you did the prayers." VCR retreats are financed entirely by donations and cost the participants nothing. The reason: no true tribal healer would ever charge money for a ceremony.

Private traditions

Michael Carroll said he was unsure, and even a little frightened, of his first sweat. But he added that after you go inside the sweat center, and the music begins, the experience was good. "Then you pray, and you begin to feel the toxins pour out of your body," he said. "And a lot of time, there's a sense of another presence, something... besides you and the other people gathered there."

Vielle and Falcon were unwilling to share too many details about the ceremonies, which are important to their culture.

Falcon added that some non-natives are taking traditional ceremonies and the tribal way of life and trying to sell the experience to others. He said some veterans come out of sweats wanting to build centers outside their own homes.

"I tell them, I can't stop you if you want to go and build one. But it won't be done in the right way," Falcon said. "And once I tell them that, they are very respectful and say, I'll build a sauna instead."



Event brings VA benefits closer to Navajo Veterans

Here's an [article by Noel Lyn Smith](#), which ran on April 10, 2018.



FARMINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Navajo Nation Veterans Affairs will host an event to help Native American veterans in identifying eligibility for benefits and filing claims. "Your Service. Our Mission: Bringing Benefits Home" is a national campaign between the VA and 20 tribal communities to help veterans access the range of benefits they earned through their military service.

Tim Love, veterans service center manager for the VA's regional benefits office in Albuquerque, said the event is designed to have resources available on site to ease the process of filing claims. "Our goal is to try to get as much work done," Love said. Another goal is to educate Native American veterans, their spouses and family members about the claims process and which benefits are available.

"They served this country and they are entitled to benefits," Love said. Wallace Charley, the veteran service officer for the tribe's veterans administration office in Shiprock, said this is the first time the two agencies are collaborating to provide services closer to the Navajo Nation.

He recommended interested veterans bring with them a DD-214, which is a military discharge document, photo identification and a Social Security card.

Charley said he was accredited with the VA last year to file claims, and the event is another way for him to share that information with veterans.

For more information about the event, contact Loraie HoMana Pawiki, tribal government relations specialist for the VA, at 928-776-5306 or loraie.pawiki@va.gov or Wallace Charley at 505-368-1078 or 505-419-6631.



Veteran Cemetery Grant Program

Here are excerpts from VA's *Veteran Cemetery Grant Program News*, March 2018.
For more information on VA's Cemetery Grant Program, please contact:
George.Eisenbach@va.gov

U.S. Rep. Bruce Poliquin Honors Families of Tribal Veterans



U.S. Representative Bruce Poliquin of Maine's 2nd District, a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee introduced bill H.R. 3657 on August 2017 to ensure that the federal government would provide government-furnished headstones or markers to spouses and children of Veterans interred in tribal Veterans cemeteries as are provided for family members buried at national and state Veterans cemeteries. Currently the government only provides headstones for dependents of Veterans who are buried at national or state Veterans cemeteries. This bill would direct the VA to provide burial benefits to eligible spouses and dependents of tribal Veterans buried in a tribal Veterans cemetery or on tribal land owned by or held in trust by a tribal organization as are provided for tribal Veterans buried in national and state cemeteries. Congressman Poliquin said that he

announced on November 8, 2017 that the bill was passed with broad bipartisan support by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill benefits tribal family members such as the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and their tribal cemetery in Aroostook county. Congressman Poliquin says, *"I'm proud of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians for creating the first tribal Veterans cemetery not only in Maine, but on the entire East Coast."*



Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Groundbreaking Event

Cass Lake, Minnesota was the location of the groundbreaking and blessing event of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe on October 5, 2017, for the construction of a Tribal cemetery at the Veterans Memorial Grounds. Tribal, state, and federal officials along with tribal Veterans and their families attended the public event.

The ground blessing was performed by Leech Lake Elder Mike Smith and his son, Michael. The Leech



Lake Honor Guard and the Cass Lake American Legion posted colors for the event. VCGP Director

George D. Eisenbach, Jr., delivered the following remarks. *"All of us associated with the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program and your project, take genuine concern and pride in the establishment of the tribal Veterans cemetery on tribal Government lands. They offer a focal point for remembering those who have worn the cloth of the nation. Moreover, they provide a record for future generations to learn from. This land is where your warriors were born and where their stories begin to take shape and*



this cemetery is where they will return when life's battles are done. Each one of the headstones and markers is going to tell a story. That's history for your youth, history to keep your culture alive. So make sure you bring your children and grandchildren, your sons and daughters, to teach them that freedom isn't free."

The Leech Lake Veterans Cemetery will be the first tribal cemetery in Minnesota to be constructed for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and expected to serve approximately 3,000 tribal Veterans and their families. Leech Lake Veterans Cemetery is projected to be open late in 2019.



"Mitakuye Oyasin" All Nations Veterans Cemetery

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe held a groundbreaking ceremony near Fort Yates, North Dakota for the establishment of their *Mitakuye Oyasin* - All Nations Veterans Cemetery on September 25, 2017. *Mitakuye Oyasin* means "All My



Relations." VA awarded the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe a tribal government establishment grant to construct the first tribal cemetery in North Dakota. The cemetery will provide a final resting place for Veterans on their tribal lands.



Norma White Lightning, the widow of Allen White Lightning was chosen to do the groundbreaking in honor of her husband's memory. He was the first Veteran buried in 2007. Allen White Lightning was a Vietnam Veteran who was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his service.

This groundbreaking ceremony marked the beginning of construction of the All Nations Veterans Cemetery. The cemetery will be available to all Veterans who have honorably served the United States Armed Services.



Wes Studi: Bringing Down Barriers Against Native American Actors

Here's an article by Gil Asakawa from AARP about West Studi, Native American actor and veteran. It ran on March 26, 2018 and can be found online [HERE](#).

Socialization starts early. Actor Wes Studi, who starred in last year's film *Hostiles* as a dying Cheyenne chief being escorted back to his Montana home by a reluctant white cavalry officer, is a boomer, born in 1947. And like all American boomers who grew up in the 1950s — the glory years of westerns in movies and on the TV screen — he played cowboys and Indians with neighborhood friends.

Studi grew up surrounded by his Cherokee family and friends in Oklahoma, yet he recalls that when the children played, "We all wanted to be the cowboy." Nobody wanted to be the Indian. "It's not a good thing," he tells AARP from his home in Santa Fe, N.M. "It was counterproductive."

Likewise, Hollywood's habit of casting white actors in starring roles was also counterproductive. As a kid, Studi says he wasn't aware of the racial inequities in the country. But he added, "I do remember one thing: That was the matter of seeing actors like Tony Curtis [playing Pima World War II hero Ira Hayes] and Chuck Connors playing Geronimo." Studi knew even as a child that those stars weren't reflections of himself. "I remember what most affected me was there was something extremely wrong here, because they were not identifiable and really contrasted with any of the real-looking Indians who were usually standing behind them. It gave me almost a nauseous feeling. I couldn't describe it to you now, but it wasn't a pleasant reaction."

The one productive portrayal that he could relate to was the Lone Ranger's "faithful Indian companion Tonto," played by Mohawk actor Jay Silverheels during the television show's run from 1949 to 1957. "In my own personal history, there was Jay Silverheels. He was the shining star, and he was working. As far back as I can remember, that's the only person we had in there," Studi says.

Studi was educated at the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, part of a program created by the U.S. government in 1884 to teach academics and agriculture to American Indian youth from all tribes so they could assimilate into mainstream America. Studi studied dry cleaning, and upon graduating in 1964, he joined the Oklahoma National Guard. He signed up for active duty in Vietnam and spent 18 months between 1968 and '69 — "just in time for Tet," he said, of the Vietnamese New Year in 1968, when the Viet Cong launched a series of furious battles.

Acting opportunities grow

Around that time, Hollywood productions began casting Native American actors in Native roles: Will Sampson in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, Chief Dan George in *Little Big Man* and Eddie Little Sky in *A Man Called Horse*. "Our numbers



began to grow only in the late '60s and '70s," Studi says. "Now we have so many capable people who would like to get in the business of show business."

What's needed for that barrier to come down once and for all is to have Native Americans in positions of power in studios. "The only way I can see it happening is to get some of us in there to where we can make some decisions," Studi says. "The Indian boarding schools back in the day were run by churches and governments and staffed by non-Natives. As time went on, Native Americans began to staff those organizations, and things changed. And tribal governments have been taken over by real Native Americans over the years, and things have changed for the better. Otherwise, it remains stacked against us."

Studi laughs at the suggestion that he needs to become a superstar, get rich and bankroll his own movie studio. But he agrees that kind of power leads to distribution, which is how movies get to the masses. Otherwise, Native American filmmakers and actors will continue to produce independent films and reach loyal but small audiences. "We need distribution — venues to put the film into. We as Native Americans don't have the infrastructure to do that," he says.

Studi took to acting late — his first film role was in a Nebraska TV production. His first big movie was as "the toughest Pawnee" in [the 1990 hit starring Kevin Costner, *Dances With Wolves*](#). His most memorable early role was as Magua, the intense Huron warrior in *The Last of the Mohicans*, the 1992 movie starring Daniel Day-Lewis. He has a long acting résumé, including Eytukan, the chief of the Omaticaya clan on the planet Pandora in the blockbuster *Avatar*.

The Academy Awards come calling

And in March, Studi took on a new role: presenter at the 90th Academy Awards ceremony. While the academy doesn't track its presenters, many reports list Studi as the first American Indian presenter in the show's history. He was asked to introduce the tribute to military veterans with a montage of Hollywood war movies, and he gave a shout-out to Native American veterans in Cherokee at the end.

"I think that it was high time that veterans were honored, as well as it was high time the academy had a Native as a presenter," he said. "When we got the invitation to present, I was, like, 'Oh, wow.' It was kind of unbelievable at first.

"At the beginning, I was asked to give a sound editing award with Laura Dern. But within a few days, the academy called again and came up with the idea of a tribute to the military. That was probably the result of the talk about [the hashtag] '#OscarsSoWhite' a few years ago. Organizations like the academy always risk becoming dogmatic in their thinking." Studi says some people suggested he give the entire tribute in Cherokee, but he didn't think that would work. "So I simply added the shout-out at the end, and it got a lot of response." It was a nice bit of justice, years after his childhood playing cowboys and Indians, to be able to embrace his Native American heritage to Hollywood in front of a worldwide broadcast audience.

Way of the Warrior Documentary

Here's a documentary [56:14] produced by Wisconsin Public Television, entitled, "Way of the Warrior." <https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/way-of-the-warrior/>

"Exploring the warrior ethic among Native Americans, this documentary also reveals how Native communities have traditionally viewed their warriors and why, during the 20th century, Native men and women have signed up for military service at a rate three times higher than non-Indians."





Apply Today to Visit A Mentor Veterans Treatment Court

NADCP's [Justice For Vets](#) is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted to participate in a one-day site visit to a mentor veterans treatment court. Mentor courts serve as model programs for individuals and court teams interested in starting a veterans treatment court or for established courts interested in learning innovative practices. The [Mentor Veterans Treatment Court Program](#) is made possible through collaboration with the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

All site visits are FREE for up to three individuals!

To apply, simply fill out our [online application](#). **Due to the overwhelming popularity of this program, availability is limited.** Once you submit your application, our staff will contact you within seven business days to discuss next steps.

[Click here to learn more and apply.](#)



Join the
Society of American Indian Government Employees
15th Annual National Training Program
GREEN BAY, WI
JUNE 11- 14, 2018



SAVE THE DATE!



NATIONALLY KNOWN SPEAKERS
FOUR TRACKS OF WORKSHOPS
VETERANS' TRACK
YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Radisson
www.radisson.com/greenbaywi

Watch www.saige.org for updates



By Kirk Larson
Social Security Washington Public Affairs Specialist



National Social Security Month is celebrated in April and is dedicated to educating you about Social Security programs and services. From programs that help support you through life's journey, to services that help put you in control, to systems that help protect what's important to you, Social Security is committed to helping secure today and tomorrow for you and your family.

During National Social Security Month, we encourage people to take control of their future with *my Social Security* at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount. Create a *my Social Security* account to check your earnings history, confirm you have enough credits to retire, see an estimate of future benefits while still working, or manage your monthly benefits once you begin receiving them. You can also check the status of your claim or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card, and get an instant benefit verification letter.

Our Retirement Estimator is another great tool that provides you with immediate and personalized benefit estimates based on your own earnings record. This allows you to receive the most accurate estimate of your future retirement benefits. Estimate your benefits now at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

After you have viewed your earnings history for accuracy, confirmed you have enough work credits to retire, and determined the best age to retire, you can get started on the next phase of your life right away by retiring online! It's fast and easy at www.socialsecurity.gov/retireonline.

For more than 80 years, Social Security has changed to meet the needs of our customers. During National Social Security Month, and throughout the year, Social Security puts you in control with secure access to your information anytime, anywhere. From estimating or managing your benefits, requesting a replacement Social Security card, to retiring online, visit SocialSecurity.gov today, and see what you can do online at www.socialsecurity.gov/online services.



**AARP
COMMUNITY
CHALLENGE**

Grants to make communities livable for people of all ages
aarp.org/CommunityChallenge

AARP Community Challenge 2018

***“Quick-action” grants to make communities
livable for people of all ages***

AARP invites you to submit applications for quick-action projects that can help YOUR community become more livable. Applications are now being accepted for small grants to improve housing, transportation, public space and other community elements that support great places for all people of all ages.



Applications are due by 5 PM ET, May 16, 2018,
and all projects must be completed by
November 5, 2018.

Applications must be submitted through AARP.org/CommunityChallenge.
See Attachment A for the sample application outline.



OTGR Central Region

(IA; MI; MN; MT; ND; NE; SD; WI; WY)



Ho-Chunk Nation Memorial Day Weekend

CONTEST POW-WOW MAY 26-27-28, 2018

Andrew Blackhawk Memorial Pow-Wow Grounds - Black River Falls, WI

GRAND ENTRIES: Sat 1 & 7 PM, Sun 1 & 7 PM, Mon 3 PM

MC: Chris Grezlik, Winnebago, NE AD: Bobby Bird Sr., Tomah, Wisconsin

MC: Boye Ladd, Albuquerque, NM AD: Gabe Desrosiers, Browns Valley, MN

Host Drums: Iron Mound; Little Thunder; Winnebago Sons; Bear Heart & Thundercloud

Head Dance Judges: Fletcher Collins-Wausau WI; Amanda Awonohpay-Cumberland WI; Lori Funmaker-Wis Dells

Head Singing Judge: Pete Gahbow-Omania MN, Head Man & Woman Dancers by Sessions, Color Guard Andrew Blackhawk Post 129

Singing Contest: 8,000; 5,000; 3,000; 2,000 - 6 Man Minimum No Drum Hopping

Golden Age 55+ Woman's Applique: Mens Traditional/Grass/Fancy Combined: Woman's Traditional/Jingle/Fancy

Combined each pays: 1st/1,000 2nd/500 3rd/300 4th/200. 18-54 Men's Traditional: Grass: Fancy: Woodland: 18-54

Woman's Applique: Traditional: Jingle: Fancy pays: 1st/1,000 2nd/600 3rd/400 4th/200. 13-17 Teen Boys Traditional:

Grass: Fancy: Girls Teen Applique: Traditional: Jingle: Fancy pays: 1st/250 2nd/200 3rd/150 4th/100. 6-12 Jr. Boys

Traditional: Grass: Fancy: 6-12 Jr. Girls Applique: Traditional: Jingle: Fancy pays: 1st/200 2nd/150 3rd/100 4th/50.

Pow-Wow Registration ends Sat. 1:30 PM (No Exceptions) Singers & Dancers MUST have ID & SS Card



Public Invited - Free Camping

Raising Andrew Blackhawk's Flag Saturday 10:00 AM

Honorary Flag Raising Monday Morning 10:00 AM



10 AM all flags at 1/2 staff. Noon all flags at full staff. Retire all colors 4:00 PM. Veteran recognition to follow

Registration for Monday's Flag Raising & Veteran's Recognition is at the Legion Post Bldg.

Sat & Sun 11:00 AM till Closed, Mon 8 - 9:30 AM

Vendor info: Donna Littlegeorge 715-299-0348

Vendor fee: \$250 Sat-Mon

Like us on
facebook

Veteran Info Donald Greengrass Sr. -Commander

608-799-0406

Event organizers, sponsors, & staff are not responsible for injuries, theft loss or property damage. Firearms, alcohol, drugs & anyone under the influence are prohibited



29th Annual Veterans of the Menominee Nation GATHERING OF WARRIORS POW WOW

REMEMBER
THE
FALLEN



VIETNAM
ERA
VETERANS

May 17-20, 2018
Woodland Bowl Keshena, Wisconsin

May 17: 5PM Walk/Run
Downtown Keshena
Sponsored by MTC Wellness Dept.

May 18: 4PM Flag Registration
6PM Flag Raising
Fallen Vietnam Era Veterans
Pin Ceremony to Follow

May 19: 11AM-2PM ONLY
Dancer & Drum Registration
Dancer payout for registered
dancers only

1PM GRAND ENTRY
POW Table Ceremony
Princess Contest
Honor Songs
Exhibitions

7PM GRAND ENTRY
Veterans Snake Dance
Dance Exhibitions/Specials

May 20: 12 Noon GRAND ENTRY
Veterans Service Songs
Honoree Recognition

HOST DRUM:
Battling Bucks, Menominee

MC's:
Joey Awonohopay, Menominee
Joey Besaw, Menominee

ARENA DIRECTOR:
Dewey "Cheeks" Thunder
Menominee



Admission: \$8 Weekend/\$5 per day
\$2000 Drum Split Payout (First 8 registered drums with 5 singers minimum)
Head Dancers selected each session
Hotels: Menominee Casino Hotel/Resort 715-799-3600
Boarders (Shawano) 715-524-9090
Wes Martin: 715-851-4748
Vendor Information: Paul Swett 715-799-4014 or 715-508-1942
Pow Wow Information: Jamie Awonohopay 715-851-0755
Andy Boivin 715-851-2127

Veterans of the Menominee Nation respectfully request no outside raffles or solicitation
Security provided, free camping, showers and firewood available
Veterans of the Menominee Nation & Menominee Indian Tribe not responsible for injuries, theft, or damage to property
Pow Wow listing subject to change without notice

OTGR Southern Plains Region

(KS; OK; TX)

OKC CHOCTAW/INTER-TRIBAL VETERANS ASSOCIATION POST 319 & CVA MONTHLY MEETING

WHEN: 1ST Saturday of each month

WHERE: Choctaw Alliance Center
5320 S Young's Blvd, OKC OK 73119

TIME: 1000 am – 1200 pm

WHO: All Native Veterans in the surrounding OKC
area

OUR MISSION: To foster camaraderie among native
veterans who served honorably. To serve our veterans
and our communities in any which way we can. To
advocate for all native veterans.

VISION: Ensure that native veterans are respected for
their service, always receive their earned entitlements,
and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved
ones have made on behalf of this great country.

POC: POST COMMANDER-Harold Marris

PHONE: 405-326-2621 or 405-456-4845

EMAIL: chatachafa@live.com

Native American Combat Veterans Group

Location: Norman First American United Methodist Church
1950 Beaumont Drive, Norman, Oklahoma, 73071

Purpose:
This group provides the opportunity for Native American Combat Veterans to transform the way PTSD impacts them and their life.

Eligibility:
Contact Billy Grimes with the Oklahoma City Vet Center to determine eligibility by phone at (405) 456-5184.



Meeting Days: 3rd Monday of every month

Meeting Times: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Dates:	February 6, 2018	February 20, 2018
	March 6, 2018	March 20, 2016
	April 3, 2018	April 17, 2018
	May 1, 2018	May 15, 2018
	June 5, 2018	June 19, 2018

Contact:
Billy Grimes with the Oklahoma City Vet Center at (405) 456-5184.

****Group may be canceled during inclement weather. Please call ahead of time.****



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



P.O. BOX 167
CONCHO, OK 73022
(405) 422-7724

The Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes Memorial Day Commemoration

Special invitation to all veterans, families of veterans, widows of veterans and active duty service members to join us in honoring and remembering our Tribal Veterans.

Event Date:

Thursday May 24, 2018

Time of Event:

11:30 am – 2:00 pm

Location:

Concho Community Hall
200 Wolf Robe Circle
Concho, Ok
73022

Contact Information:

Russell Willey – OVA Director
Office: 405-422-7724
Cell: 405-248-7520
Email: lwilley@c-a-tribes.org



VA  U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Your Service. Our Mission.

VA WILL BE HOLDING A

Bringing VA Benefits Home event

in your hometown.





During the event, you can:

- ✓ Speak with a VA representative
- ✓ Get answers to VA claim and benefits questions
- ✓ File your claim
- ✓ Get same-day decisions when you share complete information

EVENT DATE & TIME(S):

May 7-8, 2018, 0900-1600

LOCATION:

Osage Casino Event Center
64464 State Highway 60
Ponca City, OK 74604

POINT OF CONTACT:

Maria DeRoin, mdderoin@osagenation-nsn.gov
Mary Culley, VA, Mary.Culley@va.gov

PHONE NUMBER:

Maria DeRoin, (918) 287-9729
Mary Culley, (405) 626-3426



Office of
Tribal Government
Relations



FLYINGTEE
fun / food / games / golf

FIRST RESPONDER FRIDAY

POLICE - EMS - FIRE - ACTIVE MILITARY - VETS

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JANUARY 12	APRIL 13
FEBRUARY 9	MAY 11
MARCH 9	JUNE 8

YOU SERVE FOR US ALL.
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*Valid ID required. Must have Honor Roll Membership to receive Free bay time.
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Save the Date!

HHS Region 7 IHS Oklahoma Area and Great Plains Area Tribes Annual Tribal Consultation

May 15 - 16, 2017

Bolling Federal Building

601 E. 12th Street

Kansas City, Missouri

(Photo ID required for entry)

Tribal leaders located in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa are invited to participate in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region 7 Tribal Consultation.

May 15-Day 1 –One-on-One Meetings, 10:00am – 4:00 pm
Cherry Street Conference Room, 1st Floor

May 16-Day 2 – Full day Consultation, 8:30am – 4:30pm
Cafeteria Conference Room, Ground Level

Tribal Engagement and Planning Call Schedule

- Tuesday, February 20th at 3:00 pm
- Wednesday, March 21th at 9:30am
- Wednesday, April 18th at 9:30am

Conference Call Toll Free Number

Call in number: 866-617-8830

Pass code: 60461345#

https://hrs.connectsolutions.com/r7_hhs_tribal_calls

